



# State Representative **Larry Haler**

## **2008 Session Review**

### 8th Legislative District

#### Representative **Larry Haler**

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**Committee assignments:**

- Appropriations
- Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Education
- Community, Economic  
Development and Trade
- Early Learning & Children's  
Services (*Ranking Republican*)

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**Legislative information  
on the Internet:**

[www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)

**State government  
on the Internet:**

[www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov)



Dear friends and neighbors,

It is amazing how fast the 60-day legislative session went this year. I am glad to be back in the Tri-Cities with family and friends.

This year, I returned to the 8th District with mixed feelings about what was accomplished in Olympia. The state passed important anti-gang and sex offender legislation to help put Washington families before felons.

Unfortunately, the legislatures also increased spending another \$291 million. With this increase the budget is now \$33.4 billion. That is an increase of 33 percent, or \$8.4 billion since 2004. Such a dramatic increase in spending is not wise and could come back to hurt the state.

The majority party indicated during session that tax increases were possible to shore up spending next year and that makes me very concerned with the idea of raising taxes on the hard-working families of the 8th District.

I truly value your input, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Larry Haler  
State Representative, 8<sup>th</sup> District





## State Representative Larry Haler

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### GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY COMING FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS



Under a proposal I sponsored, House Bill 2567, the penalty for violating the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) would increase from \$100 to a range of \$250 to \$1,000. This bill passed the House and was set for consideration on the Senate floor the last day of session; However, the session ended before a vote was taken.

The Legislature created the OPMA in 1971, which requires that all meetings of the governing body of a public agency be open for anyone to attend. The penalty for this violation has not been updated since its inception. Adjusting for inflation, \$100 from 1971 is now worth more than \$500.

The goal of my proposal was to get officials to comply with the law and a stiffer penalty was a move in the right direction. Under this proposal, county superior court judges would be responsible for determining the severity of the fine.



*Rep. Haler meets in Olympia with representatives from Red Mountain.*

### STATE CRACKS DOWN ON GANGS



Thanks to a bipartisan effort to make our communities safer, Washington has passed comprehensive anti-gang legislation.

Criminal street gangs have the ability to take over our communities, but this session lawmakers took a firm stand that our families and communities must come before felons.

House Bill 2712 provides a definition of street gangs, which will assist judges during sentencing. The bill creates a statewide gang database to help law enforcement track and identify gang members.

I supported this legislation and believe the state has made a positive step to help suppress, intervene and prevent gang violence within our communities.

### STATE SPENDING COULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS



Since 2004, state spending has increased \$8.4 billion – 33 percent! With such a drastic spending increase, I think it is fair to ask: Has health care improved? Are children receiving a world-class education? Are drivers still spending too much time in traffic?

This session the majority added yet another \$291 million to an already bloated budget, and I am not sure we can really show the results for such huge spending increases.

As you know, I believe in fiscal responsibility. Unfortunately, state spending habits are hard to reform and the state is looking at huge deficits over the next four years.

The nonpartisan Senate Ways and Means staff predicts a budget deficit of \$2.4 billion for the 2009-11 biennium and a \$5 billion deficit for the 2011-13 biennium. To cover these deficits the majority party has gone on the record that tax increases are on the table. It is difficult to imagine that the state had its largest budget surplus just a couple years ago, and now we are staring down the barrel of program cuts or tax increases to balance the books.



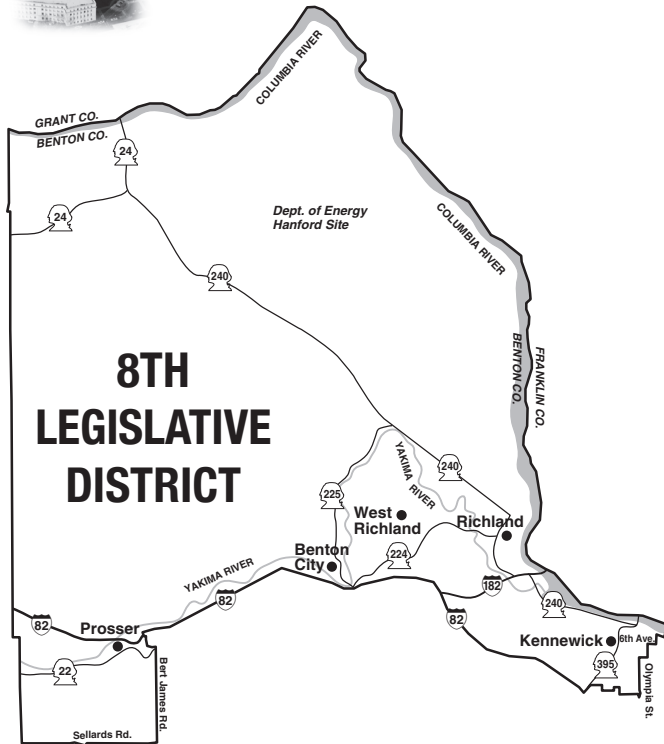
#### DISTRICT OFFICE IS OPEN!

My district office has re-opened and is again staffed by my legislative assistant, Jan Swenson. Please feel free to stop by for a visit. Our office hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you would like to set up an appointment to meet with me, please call my office at 509-372-7997. You can also e-mail me at [haler.larry@leg.wa.gov](mailto:haler.larry@leg.wa.gov)





# State Representative **Larry Haler**



## Issues, ideas, concerns – please contact me!

Being your legislator is a serious responsibility and I am here to serve you. Please contact me to discuss topics important to you and your family.

How to reach me:

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